



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AUSTIN TEXAS  
INTER-OFFICE

02-147

**TO:** WIC Regional Directors  
WIC Local Agency Directors

**FROM:** Barbara Keir, M.A., R.D., Director  
Public Health Nutrition and Education

**Original Signed**

**DATE:** December 2, 2002

**SUBJECT:** Texas Department of Health Dietetic Internship Needs Survey

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Over five years ago you responded to a survey that provided us with information regarding the needs and resources for the Texas Department of Health (TDH) Dietetic Internship (DI). Since that time the internship has been developmentally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetic Education of the American Dietetic Association and has graduated a total of twenty interns in three classes.

Eighteen of these twenty (90%) are still employed with their WIC local agencies and are providing advanced nutrition services to WIC participants. Twelve (60%) have passed the registration exam and are now registered dietitians. The other eight are expected to take the exam in the next couple of months. These graduates are fulfilling the mission of the TDH DI to enhance the quality of nutrition services delivered to WIC clients. Many have received promotions and are now in leadership positions within their WIC local agency. To paraphrase one of the intern's WIC Director: "I sent a shy unassuming nutritionist to the internship and received a self-assured, competent professional in return."

The graduates are ethnically as well as geographically diverse. Of the twenty graduates, eleven are Hispanic and nine are non-Hispanic. Ten of the eleven Hispanic graduates speak Spanish. Some of the non-Hispanic graduates also speak Spanish, which helps to meet the goal of providing advanced nutrition services to Spanish speaking WIC clients. One of the graduates is male which also helps to meet the profession's goal of increasing diversity.

The eighteen graduates are serving WIC clients in:

- **North Texas** (Fort Worth – Tarrant Co.)
- **West Texas** (Plainview – 10 counties; Midland/Odessa – 16 counties; El Paso – El Paso Co.)
- **East Texas** (Lufkin – Angelina Co.; Houston; Victoria – 5 counties)
- **South Texas** (Laredo – Webb Co.; Starr Co.; Hidalgo Co.; Brownsville – Cameron Co.)
- **Central Texas** (Georgetown – Williamson Co.; San Antonio – Bexar Co.)

The fourth class of interns has been selected and will begin the internship January 6, 2003.

Attached is a two-page TDH Dietetic Internship Needs Survey that will help us identify potential applicants for future internship classes and provide direction for recruitment efforts. Eligible applicants are nutritionists employed by Texas WIC local agencies who have completed an American Dietetic Association approved Didactic Program in Dietetics.

We need your help in identifying potential internship applicants. I highly recommend that your agency consider this excellent opportunity for staff who may be qualified. If your local agency is unable to recruit an adequate number of registered dietitians or licensed dietitians to meet the needs of your WIC participants, we strongly encourage you to consider the TDH Dietetic Internship. TDH Dietetic Internship Information can be located on the TDH Web site at <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/wichd/nut/intern-intro.htm>.

Please take time to complete page one and make copies of page two for your nutritionists to complete. Please fax completed surveys to Sherry Clark at (512) 458-7446 by December 20, 2002.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Ms. Sherry Clark, M.P.H., R.D., L.D., TDH Dietetic Internship Director at (512) 458-7111, extension 2142, or email [sherry.clark@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:sherry.clark@tdh.state.tx.us).

**Texas Department of Health  
Dietetic Internship Needs Survey**

WIC Local Agency # \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person completing survey \_\_\_\_\_

1. How many registered dietitians (RD) does your WIC Local agency employ? Do not include those who are on contract or are consultants.

\_\_\_\_\_ Number

\_\_\_\_\_ Don't know/can't determine

2. How many nutritionists (with at least a bachelor's degree in nutrition or dietetics) who are not RDs does your agency employ?

\_\_\_\_\_ Number

\_\_\_\_\_ Don't know/can't determine

3. How many of the nutritionists (identified in question #2) have (or are eligible to have) a verification statement from a Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD\*)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Number (Please ask these nutritionists to complete the attached form)

\_\_\_\_\_ Don't know/can't determine

4. Would you consider encouraging your staff nutritionists with a degree in nutrition or dietetics to apply for the internship?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

If no, please explain:

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5. Would you consider using the internship as a recruitment tool to hire qualified staff?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

If no, please explain:

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\* DPD = Didactic Program in Dietetics – Nutritionists that have completed a nutrition or dietetics degree since 1990 from an American Dietetic Association accredited undergraduate program should have received an DPD verification statement. These can be obtained from the college from which they graduated.

## Interest in Dietetic Internship WIC Nutritionist Survey

The TDH Dietetic Internship needs to determine the potential number of applicants for the internship, the degree of interest of potential applicants in applying to the internship, and any barriers to participation in the internship. This information will assist in planning for the next 5 years for the TDH Dietetic Internship.

If you have at least a bachelor's degree in nutrition or dietetics please complete this brief survey and fax back to Sherry Clark at (512) 458-7446 by December 20, 2002.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Local WIC Agency # \_\_\_\_\_ Years Employed by WIC \_\_\_\_\_

Interested in applying for TDH DI? \*\* Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Need more information? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

\*\*If yes, identify any concerns you may have about the internship by placing an X in the blank next to the letter(s). If no, please identify the reasons by placing an X in the blank next to the letter(s).

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. I don't have a DPD verification statement from my undergraduate college
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. I feel my GPA in undergraduate school was too low
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. I'm not sure of how to apply
- \_\_\_\_\_ D. My director does not think s/he could find a temp for my position during my absence
- \_\_\_\_\_ E. I have family at home who I cannot leave for out of town seminars
- \_\_\_\_\_ F. I cannot leave home for any supervised experiences outside of the area I live in
- \_\_\_\_\_ G. I'm unsure of my ability to complete internship
- \_\_\_\_\_ H. I have no time to study
- \_\_\_\_\_ I. My study skills are too weak
- \_\_\_\_\_ J. I'm afraid I won't succeed
- \_\_\_\_\_ K. I'm not interested in achieving RD credential
- \_\_\_\_\_ L. My spouse, parent or other family member does not want me to do this
- \_\_\_\_\_ M. I don't want to commit to 2 years of working for WIC (2 year work obligation to local agency after completion of internship is required)
- \_\_\_\_\_ N. The governing body or parent agency of my WIC agency won't allow
- \_\_\_\_\_ O. My WIC Agency can't afford cost
- \_\_\_\_\_ P. My WIC Agency can't afford my time off from work
- \_\_\_\_\_ Q. My WIC Agency won't allow
- \_\_\_\_\_ R. Other reasons not listed here (write in) \_\_\_\_\_

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